

August Transition Planning Update from Session

Summer is a season for good-spirited anticipation of new beginnings at VPC along with thankfulness and optimism!

As VPC celebrates our **150th anniversary** as a church, we are reminded of our proud history and traditions, the accomplishments of the faithful who came before us, and our ongoing commitment to worship, fellowship, and service to our neighbors near and far. How wonderful that this celebration of our history coincides with a season of transition and focus on VPC's bright future.

Transition Process

Your Session continues to actively engage with our transition consultants and with members of our congregation. We are busy with the initial analysis of data collected during the congregational survey. The responsiveness of our congregation was exemplary with over 350 surveys returned. You might be interested to know that the two most frequent words given in the survey to describe how we feel about our church today are "**transition**" and "**hope**." These two words reflect the reality of this moment in the life of our church and our shared excitement with what God has ahead with our new pastor.

Session and congregational members of Transition Working Groups are listening during ten formal focus groups, facilitated by our consultants, and also during a dozen less formal but essential listening opportunities. Session members are extremely grateful for the willingness of our congregation to participate despite the summer season and the continuing pandemic. The product of this summer of work with the consultants will be a self-study report presented to Session and our new Pastor Hope Lee on October 16.

Pastor Hope Update

As a reminder, Pastor Hope will begin work at VPC on Monday, October 4, and will preach her first sermon as our Lead Pastor on Sunday, October 10. Pastor Hope attended a VPC Staff meeting on July 14 where she shared stories about her family and spoke about her pastoral and leadership style. The staff shared a great spirit of enthusiasm and positive excitement from this personal encounter.

Staff Update

Part of our transition season involves saying goodbye to some staff members. Because Session has heard concerns from the congregation about the staff departures, we want to let you know that all of the departing staff members are leaving in good standing, and none of the changes are related to our pastoral transition or our ongoing work with the transition consultants. Each employee's choice is logical and normal in the context of personal, family, and career stage, and all the departing employees have expressed appreciation for their time at VPC and wish us well.

For mission-critical positions, VPC has already begun recruiting for new staff members. We know that God has people in mind already for our staff needs and we remain prayerfully optimistic to receive and welcome those who will help us in our ministry for the future. In the meantime, Pastor Stan has made some realignments to cover the workload in the interim period.

Session expresses our heartfelt appreciation to all members of VPC staff, those moving on and those who are staying with us, for the extraordinary work they have done as we have worked together as a community to meet the needs of our church, especially over the last eighteen months. We are so grateful and blessed for all that you do!

Finally, we want to express a warm welcome back to Pastor Glenda as she returns from pastoral leave. Her first day back will be Sunday, August 8. Her return to active ministry is a source of joy and encouragement to staff, Session, and the entire congregation.

We eagerly anticipate all the wonderful things God has planned for VPC during the rest of the summer and into the fall.

For questions, or for any concerns you wish to express, you may contact:
communications@viennapres.org